

CHAD IKIN

SURVIVAL NAVIGATION

**20 LESSONS HOW TO
FIND YOUR WAY IN THE
W I L D E R N E S S**



Survival Navigation:

20 Lessons How To Find Your Way In The Wilderness

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Introduction: You Won't Get Lost

You know the feeling. You are out on some camping hike or otherwise wilderness excursion walking down what you thought was a beaten path, but by the time it takes for you to look down at your phone and then back up at the road; Bam! It happens! And you get lost! That sinking feeling of bewilderment can emerge from any of us when we are lost in the wilderness.

This is only natural. But after that feeling of distress sinks in, it is what you will do afterwards that will dictate the terms of your survival. This is the point that you will rely upon important lessons in navigation in order to find your way out of the position that you are in. This book provides you with those key lessons. Follow them closely and you won't get lost!

Chapter 1: Understanding the Lay of the Land

Knowing the actual lay of the land itself is crucial in being able to navigate wherever you may go. Quite simply put; if you don't understand how to navigate through the basic terrain of your wilderness environment, you won't be able to understand any other aspect of your trip. We all use a complicated set of details in order to make our way through any environment, and if even just a few of these details change, we can find ourselves pretty confused pretty quickly.

But with a basic understanding of the lay of the land itself through maps, natural landmarks, and binocular spotting, just to name a few, can save you a lot of time and energy later on. It is only through an inherent lack of knowledge that most wind up navigationally deficient. This chapter provides you with just the lesson plan you need when it comes to understanding the lay of the land.

Understand How to Read Topographical Maps



Maps are important. But so is the *kind* of map that you use. If you are trying to go down the highway and you would like to know where the next town over is located, then you will want a road map. But when there are no mile markers available, no road sign, or even any nearby towns—when there is nothing but trees, rivers, and mountains—you will need a completely different map entirely; you will need a topographical map.

These maps are specially made to use lines and colors on the map to indicate very specific areas of the terrain. If you see “white” for example, this is a clear indication of an open field, but if you were to see a bunch of smatterings of green on the page this means that there will be a lot of foliage such as forests, woods, and patches of shrubbery. If you see “blue” on the other hand this is a clear indication of water in the area.

Squares and circles are used to simulate artificial buildings and are a clear indication that human civilization isn’t far behind. These little clues provided by a topographical map are of tremendous importance and can really help you out when you are in a bind. These maps are also of great benefit in the way that they use special contour lines to represent indentations in the land.

If you see lines forming the shape of a “V” this is a possible indication of a land structure carved deep into the ground such as a canyon. But if you were to see a series of circles you can be sure that you are near a mountainous or hilly landscape. This is all extremely useful when you are trying to traverse, and navigate through difficult wilderness.

Understand How to Use Binoculars



Our vision in its natural state is a finite instrument and it quite literally; *only goes so far*. In fact, human sight in its normal condition is fairly limited. From great distances our eyes can be deceive and landmarks can become obscured. But this is why humans create special tools to augment our own limitations, and with a little bit of mechanical aid, we can solve this dilemma.

Binoculars can provide us with that aid. A pair of binoculars work by taking light and intensely focusing it through the lens and on down to your retina, so that you can make the most of what it is that you are seeing. And as a result of this maximization of light, you can manage to magnify your visual range by a much as 10x's its standard capacity. Beyond the standard pair of binoculars, there are even more powerful versions that can take you even further past the 10x's threshold of magnification.

But just one piece of caution with these more powerful units; the more powerful their magnification, the steadier you need to keep your binoculars. Because as the capacity of the binoculars' magnification grows, so does its sensitivity. And if you are using a pair of binoculars with 20x's magnification capacity for example, the second you pick

the device up you will need to steady it and keep it level, since it will immediately begin picking up any extra movement of your hands, compromising your view.

So if you tend to have shaky hands, you may want to second guess this one. You could also use a tripod stand to put your binoculars on which could prove very useful for you as well. When you are miles and miles away from your campsite, being able to look through a pair of binoculars and see the smoke of your campfire 15 miles away, could be of tremendous help. So yes, you should have a good understanding of binoculars and how they work, in order to aid you in your navigation through the wilderness.

Use Natural Landmarks



Nature provides us with readily made guide posts to help us when we are lost. These natural landmarks can come in the form of lakes, rivers, tree patches, or even just large rocks on the side of a trail. You can use these landmarks to help mark the territory that you have already covered and to let you know when you have gone too far off the beaten path. Just make sure that you use landmarks that are fairly unique so that you don't confuse yourself later on.

I figured this out for myself the hard way on a hiking trip with my friends. After a long hike we had become disoriented and couldn't seem to find our way back to camp. I told my friends to rely upon landmarks in order to get back and informed them that I was absolutely certain that a large rock outcropping was just north of our campsite. I was right in this assertion, the only problem was; I ended up going to the wrong rock outcropping!

When there are several near identical copies of the same piece of landmark real estate you can find your self in a lot of trouble real fast, so if you use landmarks just make sure that you choose something that really stands out. Instead of marking your territory by the big fallen oak tree in the midst of all the other potential, big fallen trees, look for something that you wouldn't see anywhere else. These unique identifiers are known as "handrail landmarks" since they can so handily navigate you back where you need to be.

Follow Rivers And Streams



Rivers and streams could almost be considered a landmark in themselves if they were not so massive, but since a stream can cover an entire landsite and a river could cover several states, these are not considered "handrail landmarks" but you can still use these major outlets to aid you in navigation. If anything else, since human habitation tends to border major bodies of water, if you follow a river or stream long enough you are bound to run right into a town, city, or some other trappings of human society.

But beyond the obvious, rivers and stream can also be used for you to regain your sense of direction once you have lost it. This is due to the fact that rivers and streams (in the Northern Hemisphere) almost always run downstream, and this means that they are almost always moving in the direction of the south, once you ascertain this you can know what direction south is, and when you know south you will know North, and when you know North you will know East, and West, your directional crisis is thereby solved!

It's as easy as that, if you can find these simple markers of direction then you can make it through the wilderness. Equipped with this knowledge you can blaze right through the wilderness and back to the safety of your destination. So if you find yourself lost, don't hesitate to use the natural flow of rivers and streams in order to navigate yourself back to where you need to be.

Walk Downhill



Most human civilization is located downhill, so if you are hopelessly lost in the wilderness, in order to find help back to human society you should try taking a look downhill. Walking downhill is also a much easier feat of navigation if your reserves of energy are running low.

If you are not already in sight of a body of water such as a stream or river traveling downhill is of tremendous help in finding these water resources since all water on our planet is subject to the Earth's gravity, and those will always flow downhill. Just as you learned from Sir Isaac Newton in your 8th grade science course, this fact will not change.

So use this proven since to find these bodies of water, and it will enable you to then employ the navigational techniques discussed in the previous section so that you can find your way out of the wilderness. All of these methods in one combination or other will be of tremendous benefit in helping navigate through the wilderness.

Chapter 2: Lessons in Directional Navigation

There are a few key lessons and strategies to learn when it comes to navigation and there is without a doubt none more crucial than the concept of; “North, South, East, West” that you learned from your grade school Earth Science teacher! If you at least know these four magical bits of information, you will be able to find your way through the wilderness. This chapter provides you with the most important lessons you should know in order to never have to guess what direction you are traveling ever again.

Using a Compass to Navigate Through the Wilderness



The compass is without a doubt, the most crucial piece of navigational equipment ever constructed. As long as you have this pocket sized instrument you will never need to worry ever again about finding your way through the wilderness. With a good compass at your disposal you will always know, North, South, East, and West without any difficulty.

The process works by way of the magnetized needle in the compass that always tries to point itself toward the North. To be precise, the needle is not pointing to the *exact* Polar North, it is actually pointing to the magnetic north. But for most intents and purposes the deviation that exists between magnetic north and true north is very slight and is not going to cause you any real difficulty in finding your way.

As long as you have a good idea of where “general north” is you should be fine. Upon implementation of the compass you should try and make sure that you keep the instrument inline with your torso, since your abdomen is your own personal gravitational center. This will give you a much better capacity for accurately deducing direction in relation to your environment.

You can get a hold of a good (good enough for the task of basic navigation through the wilderness) compass from most hardware and department stores at a fairly reasonable price. Rather than buying one however, you could also make your own. Since the classic compass simply uses a piece of magnetized metal to point to the north, all you have to do is get a similar piece of metal and use it for the same purpose.

Working nicely for this task would be a sewing needle or even a paperclip. Simply take one of these ubiquitous household items and vigorously rub a piece of cloth over them until they become statically charged. These metals are now magnetized. You can now place them in some kind of fluid medium, such as a small bowl of water. You will see that the needle now immediately begin spinning around in the water in its age old struggle to find North! All in all, using a compass can greatly aid you in your quest of navigation!

Using the Stars as Your Navigational Guide



Over the course of untold millennia humanity has been using the nighttime celestial entities known as “stars” as a means to shine their way back home. In fact, one star in particular even gained its name due to its repeated use as a guidepost of direction. What star am I speaking of? Why the “North Star” of course! This stellar neighbor is conveniently positioned right over the Polar North of the planet and as a consequence, as soon as you get this star in your sights, it lets you know without fail exactly where North is.

And you don’t have to be an expert astronomer in order to find this star either; as long as you know where the “Big Dipper” is; then you know where the North Star is as well. The North Star can be seen situated, hanging out by itself, directly across from the Big Dipper. Knowing the location of the North Star can be a great boon to your navigational ability when you are in the Northern Hemisphere, but if you are situated in a place like New Zealand in the Southern Hemisphere you will not be able to see the North Star at all.

But don’t worry, because the celestial bodies present in the Southern Hemisphere have their perks as well! If you are located anywhere on the bottom half of the Earth and could use a little point in the right direction, all you have to do is look for the “Southern Cross”. The Southern Cross is a big constellation which consists—just like the name might imply—of a series of stars forming a cross-like formation up in the sky. This Southern Cross always points toward the South, so if you find yourself lost in

Kiwi country just look for this cross to guide you back home again! Use the stars as your navigational guide!

Solar Navigation



If anything else, the sun is rather convenient tool for navigation simply by virtue of the fact that it is always there. Unless it is incredibly cloudy, during the daytime you should be able to use the movement of the sun to plot your course. And if from your vantage point the sun always sets in the West, you can be certain that the sun will then rise in the East, thereby giving you all the direction you need to find North and South.

The time of day in relation to the sun will also aid you in deducing direction. In the Northern Hemisphere for example, at 12 noon, when the sunlight is directly striking your face, this means that you are facing the South. These two methods alone should be enough to help you find your way, but if you don't mind getting technical, you can take things even further by creating your own kind of solar compass to help aid in the process of your navigation.

Just find an open clearing free from brush and plant a stick down in the ground, as the sun shines down on the stick, take note of where the stick's shadow falls and then place a rock down to mark this position. About fifteen minutes after the shadow has changed position from change in lighting, take another rock and put it down where the new shadow is located. Now from where these rocks are positioned in relation to the stick you can use them to know North, South, East, and West.

Using the Moon



If you have a clear night sky and the moon is shining bright then you can easily use the moon to find your way through the wilderness. A crescent moon for example can be used by visually imagining a straight line connecting the tips of the crescent. In the Northern Hemisphere the southern most tip o the crescent point to the North, and the in the Southern Hemisphere, the southernmost tip indicates South.

Another great way to use the moon for navigation is to consider the fact that when the moon emerges before the setting sun, the main sight of illumination points to the West, but if the moon emerges after the setting sun the side of illumination is pointing toward the East. This is due to the fact that the sun moves from East to West, and since the moon has no light of its own but simply reflects the light the sun shines on it, the position of the sun in outer space dictates what side of the moon is illuminated, thereby giving an absolutely correct basis of directional data based on this information.

Chapter 3: Lessons in Navigational Communication

Communication is a major part of logistics and communication, if you are truly lost; or even worse, if you are injured, you should have some means of being able to get the word out to first responders. Here are some of the best ways that you could do just that, use the lessons presented here to establish contact with the outside world when you are lost and needing direction.

Bring a Hand Cranked Radio



I just can't stop singing the praises of these hand cranked radios! Everything single thing about these erstwhile units is simply fantastic! They don't need batteries and

they don't need any other form of external electricity, all they need is the power of your own hand to crank them to life. Just grab the handle and spin it around as fast as you can and soon enough you will have enough power to use this radio!

Not only do you gain access to a radio you also give your arm a great workout! Most of these hand cranked radios serve as great USB hubs as well, allowing you to plug in your cell phones, or any other USB chargeable device, powering up all of your electronics with just the crank of a hand! This piece of communication based navigation is not to be missed!

Use Walkie Talkies



Walkie talkies can be a great asset if you are traveling in a group through the wilderness. Just by handing your hiking buddies one of these short range radio receiver/transmitters your group can more easily split up without getting lost. Walkie Talkies couldn't be easier to use either, all you have to do is turn them on and put them on the appropriate channel and you will immediately begin hearing any transmissions that are sent through.

And in order to send your own transmissions all you have to do is push a button—usually located on the side of the device—and the receiver will temporarily be turned into a transmitter to send your own message out to the person on the other end. It may not allow for immediate two-way talk, but when you need to send someone ahead of your group to scout out coordinates, even this one-at-a time communication

method is invaluable. So make sure that you have a set of walkie talkies as a part of your navigational arsenal.

Bring a Sat Phone



These phones are an amazing asset for those that can afford it. By receiving a constant feed from an orbiting satellite platform, you never have to worry about sketchy phone service. Even in the most inhospitable of terrain, as long as that plucky little satellite is plugging along you will be able to use your phone no matter where you are.

Unfortunately most satellite phones have some rather exorbitant costs attached to them, and the price of a satellite plan isn't that much better either. But for those that can stomach the price tag that comes along with them, a Sat Phone will make sure that you will always have a means of communication if you get lost! This phone makes navigation a breeze!

Use Signal Flares



First responders are drawn to a signal flare like moths to a flame and not long after launching one of these babies into the air you are bound to get some sort o response.

And besides emergency rescue out of the wilderness, these flares are great navigational tools in themselves. You can use them by having advance parties cue you in to a location, helping you navigate to their area. You can also set them off over a distant terrain and then use their location to walk to that location. One of the best ways to do this is to use what is known as a “flaming triangle” in which you put your flares in a triangular formation that you can’t miss. This is a great tool o navigation in the wilderness.

Make use of Smoke Signals



In a similar fashion as signal flares, you can use the smoke from a fire to clue you in to a certain location. One great example as to how you can use this in navigation in order to prevent yourself from getting lost would be to start a (safe and controlled) campfire at your sight and let the smoke rise how into the air so that it can be seen from a great distance. Now when you move far from your camp you will be able to see the smoke from far away, allowing you to be led back to your campsite simply by following the smoky trail that you see. These smoke signals can also be used for communication purposes across vast distances of wilderness terrain, so don't underestimate the powers of a little smoke when it comes to navigation.

Chapter 4: Using Nature as Our Guide

When we think of the wilderness we tend to think of a place of immense uncertainty in which we could easily become lost. The trees cast monstrous shadows of obscurity onto our wilderness paths and streams and the wildlife that screams at us from varying angles of the brush only seem to mock our own sense of bewilderment. But this is just our perception and not the reality. Because in reality, the wilderness environment offers us a wide array of special indicators as to where we are and in what direction we are traveling if we just knew how to look for them; this chapter teaches you how to use nature as your own personal navigational guide.

Frequently take note of Nature Trail Postings



If you have ever went hiking then you have no doubt noticed those rather ubiquitous signs that are posted at just about every corner. These signs are not just to annoy you with useless facts about your campgrounds, they are actually there to help steer you in the right direction! From these signposts you can glean all kinds of pertinent navigational information such as your current mile marker, nearby landmarks, and even an outright map showing your exact location. So yes, pay attention and frequently take note of all the nature trail postings that you may see along the way.

Follow the sound of Birds



Studies have show that birds use what are called “sound maps” in order to help them navigate from one location to another. They call from tree to tree in order to create an exact map of their surroundings. If you know what to look for you can tap into this map as well. If you hear repetitive bird calls to the south for example you can now that if you keep following those calls you will be able to navigate in that direction. So as funny as it may sound, you should use the call of birds to navigate through the wilderness when you can.

Check which way the Fish Swim



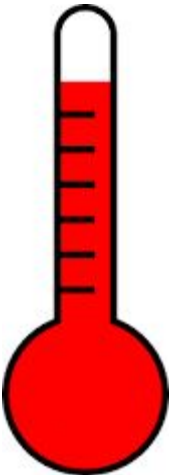
It is true that fish always swim upstream, and if they swim upstream that means that you will know exactly where North is. So keep following the fish and you will not be let down! It just may provide you a meal while you are at it too!

Pay Attention to Vegetation



Have you ever heard that moss only grows on the north side of a tree? Well, guess what folks, this isn't an old wives tale, it is absolutely correct, and if you suddenly find yourself turned around in the middle of nowhere, this little tidbit of could very well save your life. So don't hesitate to use it.

Use Temperature



As it turns out, temperature is an excellent gauge of direction. If it is hotter in one direction you can be sure the sun isn't far behind! Compatible with the earlier section that dictates how you can figure out direction by way of the sun, you can use temperature to ascertain the sun's movement in the first place. So be sure to check the temperature when you are navigating through the wilderness!

Watch the Clouds

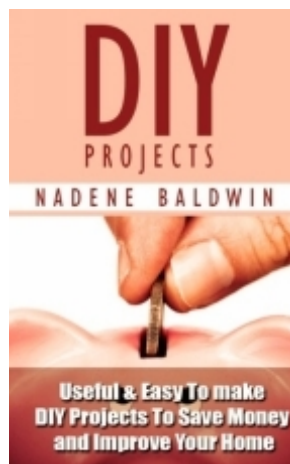


If you spent much time at all cloud gazing as a kid you may have noticed that the movement of the clouds have a distinct pattern and this pattern is almost always from West to East. So no matter where you are, if it is a cloudy day, and you look up at the sky you can easily figure out where West and East are simply by tracking their movements. And of course, once you know West and East it is a simple matter of common reasoning to know where North and South are as well.

Conclusion: The Flight of the Navigator

There is an old Disney Movie called, “The Flight of the Navigator”, in this film an alien spaceship crashes to Earth and after a young boy comes into contact with it, it produces a digital star map on the kid’s brain in order to be able to find its way home. The kid was able to pinpoint exact locations just by thinking about it as a result. But believe me, you don’t need alien intervention in order to find your way through the wilderness, all you really need is a few key lessons that will help you find your way though the wild, and I hope that the 20 lessons provided for you in this book will do just that! Thank you for reading!

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